taken by the Government to protect the endangered species of animals and birds in the country are as under:—

(i) Legal protection has been provided to wild animals against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

(ii) Several rare and endangered species of wild animals have been included in the Schedules of Wild Life (Protection) Act, thereby giving them the highest degree of protection.

(iii) The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 has been amended and made more stringent.

(iv) Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehended and prosecute wildlife offenders.

(v) Financial and technical assistance are provided to the States under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, viz. Project Tiger, Project Elephant, Central Zoo Authority and Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of the states for providing effective protection of wild animals.

(vi) Bilateral agreements have been signed with Nepal and Republic of China for controlling trans-boundary illegal trade in wildlife.

(vii) Action has been taken for implementing the urgent recommendations of the Tiger Task Force.

(viii) The conservation breeding programme of rare and endangered wildlife species is being undertaken by the Central Zoo Authority in collaboration with various zoos in the country.

(c) Does not arise.

Norms for care of animals in zoological parks

†2000. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of zoological parks in the country;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether it is a fact that Government do not have any norms in respect of food and healthcare of animals in major zoological parks;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether Government propose to conduct any scientific study in respect of food and healthcare of animals;

(e) if so, the steps taken by Government in this regard; and

(f) the measures taken by Government to improve the norms relating to food and healthcare of the animals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) There are 159 recognised zoological parks in the country.

(b) No, Sir. The Recognition of Zoo Rules, 1992, prescribes the minimum required standards and norms for food and healthcare of wild animals. All recognised zoos are required to strictly comply with the condition.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. The Central Zoo Authority has awarded scientific study to be conducted in respect of food and healthcare of zoo animals to the National Institute of Animal Nutrition and Physiology, Bangalore and Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Bareilly respectively.

(f) The Central Zoo Authority is providing financial assistance to the six veterinary colleges/universities at Bareilly, Jammu, Bhubaneswar, Guwahati, Chennai and Anand for providing better technical help to the Indian Zoos for upkeep and healthcare of the wild animals in captivity.

Funds for fencing the forests

2001. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any funds have been allocated to various States including Punjab during the last two years and current year to fence the forests; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise?